

Article

Psyche and ethics in C. G. Jung: the place of the irrational in the constitution of the ethos

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Abstract: The article calls into question Jung's assertion that ethics would be summed up in the relationship between man and God. Taking it as a problem, it seeks an articulation between the Jungian concepts for an answer of what is meant by ethics in this perspective. We outline a course that goes through the problems of moral opposites, the confrontation with the shadow, and finally, we approach the question that starts the research. In the end, we argue that such a relationship referred to by Jung is, in psychological terms, the relationship between the ego and the Self. Ethics would be in this system a response to that other supra-rational voice, "the voice of God," which, beyond the pure aesthetics of the image, combines conscious and unconscious; demands the entire personality.

Keywords: ethics, C. G. Jung, alterity.

Presentation

It is common in the work of Carl Gustav Jung to find a differentiation between moral and ethics. Even though in many points the word *moral* has the general sense of ethical behavior, the Swiss psychiatrist, at various times, marks a clear difference between the two notions. It is possible to see this in the following passage:

But, with deeper self-knowledge, one is often confronted with the most difficult problems of all, namely conflicts of duty, which simply cannot be decided by any moral precepts, neither those of the decalogue nor of other authorities. This is where ethical decisions really begin, for the mere observance of a codified "Thou shalt not" is not in any sense an ethical decision, but merely an act of obedience and, in certain circumstances, a convenient loophole that has nothing to do with ethics. (Jung, 1958/1964¹, § 677)

Ethics, therefore, would arise from the differentiation itself between the individual and the collective, i.e., from the increase of self-knowledge and responsibility for one's actions.

To deal with this theme with more details, in Jung, we need to go through some discussions that we consider fundamental. Naturally, in his work, ethics would be crossed by the problem of opposites, notably, by good and evil. This is an inevitable matter for Jung, as it is an integral part of the confrontation with the unconscious that occurs at the beginning of the development of any analysis or even individuation in a broad sense.

In addition, if ethics must go through the tension between good and evil, it is consequently connected to the problem of the *shadow*². Since this concept forces us to think about this polarity, also present in our own breasts.

The issue involves, for Jung, elements that are not strictly in the order of rationality and consciousness, thus becoming far more complex from the psychological point of view. His observation is that there is an irrational factor linked to this problem, which in a first reading of the author's work seems unusual and even "obscure".

However, we found a letter from Jung to an American student, at the time a freshman of the course of Philosophy, which asked about the problem of ethics and moral values:

The ethical question can be summed up in the relationship between man and God. Any other type of ethical decision would be conventional, meaning that it would depend on a traditional and collective code of moral values. . . . The great difficulty, of course, is the "will of God".

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1 For references of the works of Jung, we use the publication year of the original text followed by the year of the edition used, which here were the *Collected Works*, for being the most accepted internationally for research, even though it has its problems, as every translation does. The quotes are made by the paragraph referred, which facilitates research in any of the available translations. In the original version of this article, all translations to Portuguese were of our responsibility.

2 As we shall see ahead, it is a concept by Jung that encloses a very distinct phenomenal dimension within the psychic dynamics.

Psychologically, the “will of God” appears in his inner experience in the form of a higher decision power, to which you can give various names, such as instinct, destiny, unconsciousness, faith, etc. (Jung, 1990, p. 300)

From these readings some questions that justify this work have emerged. How to understand these ideas brought by Jung that “ethics can be summed up in the relationship between man and God”? Was he proselytizing? Certainly not. Then, how are these claims articulated to the larger body of his work? How can we think his conception of ethics related to alterity?

To approach a solution to these questions, we drew a methodological path that shall pass by the Jungian concepts raised so far: firstly, the question of good and evil and its place in this psychology. Second, we shall discuss the shadow archetype, which is closely linked to the mentioned opposites. Finally, we shall advance to the problem of the relationship between man and God (or *imago Dei*), attempting to clarify the previously cited statements by Jung.

An antinomic theory of the psyche

An essential step to get to the problem of moral opposites in Jung is to understand his conception of psychism, as this notion is what seems to sustain his argument about the moral poles good and evil – and any other pair of psychic opposites –, as well as about the attitude of the individual before them.

In an article from 1935, Jung (1935/1988) discusses an epistemological issue, which still accompanies psychology today. He compares the situation of psychotherapy at the time to that of modern physics, then in development, with its contradictory theories about the same phenomenon – e.g., the light, about which physicists ended up accepting, not without great resistance, a theory of its dual nature: undulatory and corpuscular –, and assumes that there is no reason to understand the psychic phenomenon differently.

The truth is that psychology is in a far more critical situation than physics, which can still have material measures, not so dependent on the individual, as well as objects considerably more stable than those of psychologies. However, at the level of a particle physics, it is likely that Jung’s comparison is still valid. Beyond simply consider the psyche a complex reality, for Jung it can only be satisfactorily described by using paradoxes, or rather, antinomies. For him, one of the fundamental antinomies of psychology:

Such is the proposition: *The psyche depends on the body, and the body depends on the psyche*. For both statements of this antinomy there are obvious evidence, in such a way that an objective judgement cannot be decided by the preponderance of the

thesis over the antithesis. (Jung, 1935/1988, § 1, emphasis of the author)

For Jung, this highlights another characteristic on the current state of our science, which is, that we can make claims that are only relatively valid. “The assertion is only valid to the extent that it is shown to which psychic system the object from the inquiry refers to” (Jung, 1935/1988, § 1). This thesis, however, is not limited to an absolute relativism. To the extent that individuality itself is not a singularity, i.e., absolute individuality, it is still possible to speak of a generic being and thus make scientific claims. “Consequently, these claims can only refer to the adequate parts of the psychic system, i.e., those which can be compared, and thus statistically collected, and not to the individual, the unique within the system” (Jung, 1935/1988, § 1). Then we come to another paradox, which necessarily requires a second fundamental antinomy:

The individual does not matter given the generic, and the generic does no matter given the individual. As is well known, there is no generic elephant; only individual elephants. But, if the generic did not exist, and a constant multiplicity of elephants existed, an unique and individual elephant would be extremely unlikely. (Jung, 1935/1988, § 1, emphasis of the author)

These considerations by Jung (1935/1988) tell us clearly that, from an early age, he elegantly solved the question of the profusion of theories and methods of psychological treatment that arose over time³. Despite the remarkable resemblance to our current way of dealing with the different theoretical and methodological assumptions – we identify *psychologies*, no longer a single psychology (Figueiredo & Santi, 2010) –, Jung goes beyond the simple acceptance of these differences, but identifies there, perhaps, the most correct way to deal with the phenomenon, i.e., characterizing it in a antinomic way. Thus, we have method that is characteristic of analytical psychology, leading to the Jungian clinic, which he will call, at that moment, *dialectical method*:

I have to choose necessarily a dialectical method, which consists of confronting the mutual investigations. But this only becomes possible if I leave to others the opportunity to present their material as completely as possible, without limiting them with my assumptions. (Jung, 1935/1988, § 2)

The Jungian “assumption” is, therefore, that, as a psychotherapist, I cannot choose between one vision of the world or another, between one moral precept or another,

³ We cannot help but notice, however, that Jung did not escape (almost) from the irresistible pretension to create, if not a theory, at least a general language to the psychological sciences, as described by Shamdasani (2011).

because doing so I would close development possibilities, impose a given value to the life of that individuality, and thus I would rework that which belongs to neurosis, i.e., the limitation of the possibilities of life, the insulation of the person, and the hardening of meanings.

This explanatory principle, which admits a reversibility, a counterpoint in the statements about the psychic, is reaffirmed in various parts of Jung's work. For example, when discussing the opposition between the functions of consciousness – i.e., between thought and feeling, and between intuition and feeling – he concludes as follows:

I consider that the problems of opposites, only lightly touched here, form the basis of a *critical psychology*, which is necessary in many respects. A criticism of this kind would be of immense value not only to the narrow circle of psychology, but also to the wider circle of sciences in general. (Jung, 1936/1986, § 260, emphasis of the author)

The mentioned *problem of opposites* seems, therefore, to be the core for our discussion, as it shall occupy most of Jung's work, either clearly through a direct approach, or as an empirical base to his theories, including the previously exposed argumentation on the fundamental antinomies.

The moral opposites

In an article dealing directly with the theme, the Swiss psychiatrist points out beforehand that, to this theme, ultimately, we cannot have access, because “Good and evil are in themselves *principles*, and we must bear in mind that a principle exists long before us and extends far beyond us” (Jung, 1959/1964, § 859). However, as the reader must have objected to, we have a general idea of what is evil objectively, i.e., what is collectively understood as such. Certainly we can say that, for example, people who live with constant violence and poverty in marginalized areas of the city of Fortaleza or any Brazilian metropolis are not living a “good life”, as rightly argued by Harris (2013). However, that is not what Jung is dealing with, but with the choices and actions of the individual regarding life.

Thus, we can only say in a very limited way that this particular situation is bad for this specific person at this time in his/her life. Even so, we take the risk of presumption, as we ultimately do not know it. Jung (1959/1964) speculates that for a given person the experience of evil can be essential to his/her moral development.

The confrontation with such extremes of human experience comes with a lot of emotional tension. Those are actually the situations in which we encounter a crossroads with a dead end. We cannot decide exactly what do, neither judge the situation objectively. Jung

(1959/1964) states that “The reality of good and evil consists in things and situations that happen to you, that are too big for you, where you are always as if facing death” (§ 871). Thus, he identifies in that sphere of experience that which he calls the numinous.

The numinous character, for Jung, is the characteristic of every experience in which an archetypal image is brightened, i.e., in which the individual is confronted with what is structurant to the self. The numinous, a term adopted by Rudolf Otto, is at the same time *fascinosum* and *tremendum*. This is why Jung raises the problem of good and evil to the level of a collective principle and, consequently, of an objective information, to the extent that it exceeds the individual's will and judgment. In this collective aspect, good and evil are principles whose experience are updated in the human through moral conflict.

I insist on this *collective* aspect because there is still, in all human experience, an individual aspect that opposes and is *conditio sine qua non* of the objective, collective aspect. These are antinomic realities, as we have seen, and yet logic and empirically dependent on each other.

Marie-Louise von Franz illustrates the individual-collective antinomy by analyzing fairy tales, seeking to understand how the theme of evil is depicted and solved in this collective fantasy material. She notes that, in these tales, the ways of dealing with evil are completely contradictory – among them, escaping, fighting, simply suffering evil, striking back, and even lying to the devil or remaining honest before him (Von Franz, 1985). But why is this so? One might ask. Von Franz (1985) found a solution to this question precisely in the collective nature of fairy tales. Inasmuch as, if we can find so many possible ways to deal with evil in the collective literature and imagination, this concerns a collective moral disposition, which enables individual decision.

Thus, we can say that in human nature it would be correct to do this or that, but *I* will do this, the *tertium*, the third thing, which is my individuality. Individuality would not exist if the basic material was not contradictory. This was my comfort after having discovered the awful truth of the contradictory structure! (Von Franz, 1985, p. 155)

We understand, therefore, that individual choice – the ethical choice – stems from the confrontation with the reality of good and evil. Before that we cannot speak of ethics or ethical behavior, because what reigns is the identity of the general attitude of the self, of the individual, with a collective ideal, unilaterally aligned morally. The identity (or identification) with the collective ideal is unconscious, as there is only consciousness when there is difference, opposition. Consciousness is, by definition, discrimination against another.

This behavior, however, is in general a later stage of the process, a much more painful one, which is to admit that evil does not live only in an exteriority severed from me, in a thug, in the religion that is not mine, in that corrupt party or a foreign country. We must confront a place of shadow within ourselves.

The confrontation with the shadow

We dealt with this topic in the previous section without announcing it. Since the shadow is, in a broad sense, the unconscious itself. Empirically, the shadow is, for Jung, first of all, one of the most important archetypes in everyday experience, since its contents relate largely to the first contact with the unconscious, called by him the *personal unconscious* (Jung, 1951/1979). However, although its contents are accessed without much effort, the integration of the shadow is a great challenge to the egoic personality, because “Becoming aware of this involves recognizing the dark aspects of personality as present and real” (Jung, 1951/1979, § 13-14). And this faces great resistance, often requiring a long period of great moral effort.

These “dark aspects” are empirically everything that was removed from the conscious life and devalued. Therefore, confrontation with the shadow requires moral effort, because relate to this is to get in touch with what was rejected consciously and/or unconsciously during an entire life, with what is inferior to me, with what I excluded, deeming to be unnecessary. It is walking through the unknown, through what I have no control. To Jung (1939/1980), “The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly—for instance, inferior traits of character and other incompatible tendencies” (§ 513).

As most of his psychological concepts, the term *shadow* attempts to reconcile separated territories, science and living symbol, seeking not to discard the eminently empirical character, i.e., the symbolic, of scientific concepts. Jung (1939/1980) explains: “The fact that the unconscious spontaneously personifies certain affectively toned contents in dreams is the reason why I have taken over these personifications in my terminology and formulated them as names” (§ 514).

Merkur (2017), in a fairly recent work about the moral in Jung, in which he proposes an assessment of Jung’s writings on ethics and moral in an unusual dialogue with psychoanalysis, situates the concept of shadow as an equivalent to the Freudian unconscious. According to him, the theory of the shadow has its roots Freud’s repression theory. However, the author makes a common mistake: to interpret the concept of shadow as evil. “The equation of the unconscious with evil, which led to its designation as the shadow, came from Jung’s empiricism” (Merkur, 2017, p. 8).

We do not find in Jung this equation alluded by Merkur (2017). On the contrary, to the Swiss psychiatrist, neither shadow, and much less the unconscious, must be understood exclusively as evil. He opposes this idea in text:

If the repressed tendencies, the shadow as I call them, were obviously evil, there would be no problem whatever. But the shadow is merely somewhat inferior, primitive, unadapted, and awkward; not wholly bad. It even contains childish or primitive qualities which would in a way vitalize and embellish human existence, but—convention forbids! (Jung, 1938/1973, § 134)

In summary, the spectrum of the shadow covers what Jung will call *inferior function*, a term derived from his studies on psychological typology, in which he conceived the existence of attitudes and functions of consciousness adaptation. To Jung (1921/1976), the psychological *function* is “a particular form of psychic activity that remains the same in principle under varying conditions” (§ 731). He distinguishes four basic functions, two rational and two irrational⁴. The inferior function is thus called because it opposes the so-called superior function, i.e., the more differentiated one and over which the self has more control, while the inferior function is more unconscious and, therefore, more autonomous. Therefore, it can be concluded that the inferior function is more within the shadow. However, it is still a guidance function, like any other, its situation of maladaptation does not classify it as evil, on the contrary, it is vital and necessary to the adaptation, as the others. In general, however, it is devalued by the individual and also by culture. This is what happens, for example, in the case of introversion and the feeling function in our time. It is not difficult to observe how, on the one hand, students are encouraged in most schools to refuse any trace of introversion, of closing within oneself, and, on the other, to also not show their feelings, much less guided their decisions based on the valuing function.

For Jung, a normal and necessary step of confrontation with these inferior parts of the personality is that they are designed in the other and in the world. For him, in fact, all the unconscious appears to be designed (1921/1976), as it is not difficult for the other to perceive in me an exaggeration in my judgment about a disaffection, my bad mood, or my excessive reliance

4 Jung argues that irrational has a sense not of *contrary* to reason, but of *beyond* reason. For him, the irrational is an existential factor, as for example the fact that the Earth has one Moon, of hydrogen being an element, or of a symbol appearing to us in a dream. “A completely rational explanation of an object that actually exists (not one that is merely posited) is a Utopian ideal. Only an object that is posited can be completely explained on rational grounds, since it does not contain anything beyond what has been posited by rational thinking” (Jung, 1921/1971, § 775).

on the other etc. The other is object and whistleblower of my projection, and what demands answers from me. Thus, alterity has a crucial role in the problem we are dealing with, because without the Other, whether it is an exteriority, in the levinasian sense⁵, or the absolute alterity from which consciousness is born, there is ethical possibility.

The confrontation with the immediate contents of the unconscious generates initially what Jung calls, inspired by Goethe's *Faust*, a feeling of "likeness to God", which can mean either a psychic inflation or deflation, but after, what happens is a stagnation for the return of the conflict (Jung, 1928/1978). Jung compares this process with images from alchemy:

Confrontation with the shadow produces at first a dead balance, a standstill that hampers moral decisions and makes convictions ineffective or even impossible. Everything becomes doubtful, which is why the alchemists called this stage *nigredo*, *tenebrositas*, chaos, melancholia. (1956/1977, § 708)

Stagnation occurs because the difference that existed before between the opposing sides was removed. There is no longer dominance of a position over the other and, thus, there is no decision, and the conflict is sustained for a long time, as much as it is the moral force of the individual, i.e., as long as he does not run from himself or repress himself. Jung (1956/1977) describes this process between two possibilities. In the first, the confrontation with the unconscious is limited to partial aspects of the unconscious, i.e., the conflict is morally limited and the solution is usually simple: to follow reason and customs. Although the solution given is not entirely satisfactory to the unconscious, the individual will be compelled to live according to his own principles and live with the existence of the repressed through its emotional repercussions, such as unwanted resentments. The second possibility, on the other hand, if the individual is able to recognize his shadow as completely as possible, conflict and disorientation resulting in a Yes and a No equally strong, which cannot simply be repressed in a rational solution or according to collective morality. In other words, he cannot hide the conflict behind a mask (Jung, 1956/1977). For Jung, in this case, there is a need for a real solution that requires a third party to unite the opposites. "Here the logic of the intellect usually

fails, for in a logical antithesis there is no third. The 'solvent' can only be of an irrational nature" (Jung, 1956/1977, § 705).

At this point, we resume what we talked about at the beginning of this essay, i.e., that ethics for Jung is inserted especially where there is a conflict of duties. Because this is the conflict felt as insoluble in the individual, and so it is from the point of view of rationality. Only the introduction of a *third* party, which is outside any logic, seems to bring a solution.

God: *tertium non datur*

Our reflection leads us, then, to the problem of the excluded third party. What is this? If this is the answer to the stagnation of the conflict of duties, the question is also presented by the patient to the therapist. What to do regarding this *cul-de-sac*? To this, Jung (1944/1980) replies:

I do nothing; there is nothing I can do except wait, with a certain trust in God, until, out of a conflict borne with patience and fortitude, there emerges the solution destined—although I cannot foresee it—for that particular person (§ 37).

Also here, Jung expects to find in "God", so to speak, the solution to the conflict. It is something very close to what he says in another passage, which we already mentioned, although much more incisive: "If one is sufficiently conscientious the conflict is endured to the end, and a creative solution emerges which is produced by the constellated archetype and possesses that compelling authority not unjustly characterized as the voice of God" (Jung, 1958/1964).

Before we assume that, for all cases of Jungian analysis, the patient arrives at a time when he/she begins to hear the voice of God, let us observe the stance proposed by Jung (1944/1980) concerning the patient's conflict:

Not that I am passive or inactive meanwhile: I help the patient to understand all the things that the unconscious produces during the conflict. The reader may believe me that these are no ordinary products. On the contrary, they are among the most significant things that have ever engaged my attention. Nor is the patient inactive; he must do the right thing, and do it with all his might, in order to prevent the pressure of evil from becoming too powerful in him (§ 37).

This indicate to us another conceptual articulation. Because if the solution requires the consideration of the unconscious material, i.e., of the *tertium non datur*, this, in certain aspects, can be identified in some cultures, for example the Judeo-Christian tradition, as a factor named "God's will". Therefore, we have to raise the hypothesis

⁵ In the work of Lévinas, we found an extensive discussion on alterity, which imposes itself in its philosophy as the ethical principle par excellence. In it, "the *Other* . . . is transcendent and pre-originary concerning even the ontological plan. Its dimension is ethical" (Freire, 2001, p. 76). Thus, Lévinas argues that ethics is the first philosophy. In Lévinas, Freire (2003) points out, "it is necessary of the I to go in the direction of its exteriority [the other] and an implication of the I by the coming of the Other that requires an irrefutable responsibility. The other introduces the possibility of the self, and the self, in its turn, is necessary for the subjection to the Other" (p. 13).

that the characterization of God's will and the *tertium non datur*, the irrational solution of the conflict, maintain a strong connection. At the conclusion of a text on the symbology of the tree on alchemy, Jung summarizes this whole process that we discussed until here, from a point of view of clinical analysis. The relevance of this passage forces us to reference an extensive quote:

As I have said, the confrontation with the unconscious usually begins in the realm of the personal unconscious, that is, of personally acquired contents which constitute the shadow, and from there leads to archetypal symbols which represent the collective unconscious. The aim of the confrontation is to abolish the dissociation. In order to reach this goal, either nature herself or medical intervention precipitates the conflict of opposites without which no union is possible. This means not only bringing the conflict to consciousness; it also involves an experience of a special kind, namely, the recognition of an alien "other" in oneself, or the objective presence of another will. The alchemists, with astonishing accuracy, called this barely understandable thing Mercurius, in which concept they included all the statements which mythology and natural philosophy had ever made about him: he is God, *daemon*, person, thing, and the innermost secret in man; psychic as well as somatic. He is himself the source of all opposites, since he is duplex and *utriusque capax* ("capable of both"). This elusive entity symbolizes the unconscious in every particular, and a correct assessment of symbols leads to direct confrontation with it. ([1945/1954]/1970, § 481)

We found a similar discussion about this other influencing the conscious individual in another point in which Jung (1958/1964) presents the idea that *Gewissen*⁶, moral conscience, is a psychic element culturally recognized as the *voice of God* and, therefore, would be prior to the moral code itself. He states:

Since olden times [*Gewissen*] has been understood by many people less as a psychic function than as a divine intervention; indeed, its dictates were regarded as *vox Dei*, the voice of God. This view shows what value and significance were, and still are, attached to the phenomenon of [*Gewissen*]. The psychologist cannot disregard such an evaluation, for it too is a well-authenticated phenomenon that must be

taken into account if we want to treat the idea of [*Gewissen*] psychologically. (1958/1964, § 839)

To Jung (1958/1964), the validity of this assertion is justified simply because it is constituted in a psychic reality. What is real, to him, is what works on the individual (Jung, 1933/1975). In this context, he takes this assertion as a basis for a discussion on the characteristics of *Gewissen*.

The first derivation, he ponders, is that the fact that the ancient assumed that *Gewissen* was the *vox Dei* itself informed about a given everyday experience, which is that this phenomenon has some autonomy in the psychic dynamics. "Conscience is a demand that asserts itself in spite of the subject, or at any rate causes him considerable difficulties" (Jung, 1958/1964, § 842).

A second derivation of this idea is that the voice of God is not easy to be recognized. Side by side with consciousness "straight" is the "false" consciousness, which has the same autonomy of the later. Thus, while the first is "fittingly called man's daemon, genius, guardian angel, better self, heart, inner voice, the inner and higher man, and so forth", the second is considered "the devil, seducer, tempter, evil spirit, etc." (Jung, 1958/1964, § 843). This finding leads to the understanding that *Gewissen* can oscillate between the moral polarities: "A more developed consciousness brings the latent moral conflict to light, or else sharpens those opposites which are already conscious" (§ 843). In addition, *Gewissen* is, for Jung (1958/1964), the phenomenon that clarifies the psyche's polarity the most.

A third point that the conception of *Gewissen* as *vox Dei* clarifies is that if it is understood as such, it tells us of the numinous character of moral reaction, as we mentioned above. The numinous, as alluded, is a category present in the work of Rudolf Otto, that defines the more specific sense of the experience which he calls *the sacred*. In this work, Otto (2007) summarizes the dual aspect of what he calls the numinous.

What the demonic-divine has of amazing and terrible for our psyche, it also has of seducer and charming. And the creature that before it shakes in the deepest fear also feels attracted to it, including in order to assimilate it. (p. 68)

The numinous is, both *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, statement that Jung will use at various moments to define the effect of the archetype.

"[*Gewissen*] is a manifestation of *mana*, of the 'extraordinarily powerful,' a quality which is the especial peculiarity of archetypal ideas (Jung, 1958/1964, § 845). Still in that scope, Jung (1958/1964) informs us that, empirically, the archetype is morally ambivalent, or rather, amoral. "The archetype is a pattern of behaviour that has always existed, that is morally indifferent as a biological phenomenon, but possesses a powerful dynamism by

6 Which he differs from *Bewusstsein*, i.e. consciousness as psychological state. We shall use the term in German in our quotations, because in both the Anglo-American and Portuguese translations the term is ambiguous and can cause confusion.

means of which it can profoundly influence human behaviour” (§ 846). For him, psychology must deal with the phenomenon of *vox Dei* understand it through the archetype hypothesis.

However, if we understand it in that way, the required question that follows is: if *Gewissen* must be understood as a kind of experience with the numinous, to what archetype these archetypal images are linked? Jung refrains, in this context, from dealing directly with this point, but provides many clues to an investigation. In addition, he makes sure to preserve the place of alterity of this other voice:

When, therefore, the psychologist explains genuine [*Gewissen*] as a collision of consciousness with a numinous archetype, he may be right. But he will have to add at once that the archetype per se, its psychoid essence, cannot be comprehended, that it possesses a transcendence which it shares with the unknown substance of the psyche in general. The mythical assertion of [*Gewissen*] that it is the voice of God is an inalienable part of its nature, the foundation of its numen. It is as much a phenomenon as [*Gewissen*] itself. (Jung, 1958/1964, § 854)

Thus, it is considered, in situations in which there is a conflict of duties, that a mobilization of unprecedented psyche spheres occurs. And, in fact, still in that state of things, the individual can seek the broad avenues of the moral code upon the repression of one side of the conflict, rather than venturing through the new paths of individual ethos. Sustaining the tension until the end, contents produced by the unconsciousness shall inevitably arrive to the consciousness, which function as a solution that would be unthinkable before. “The nature of the solution is in accord with the deepest foundations of the personality as well as with its wholeness; it embraces conscious and unconscious and therefore transcends the ego” (Jung, 1958/1964, § 856).

This solution is what, for Jung, constitutes the particular ethos produced from the clash and the conflict endured to the end. For him, the ethos is not, as presented above, the simple result of intellect or reason. It is the product of cooperation between consciousness and unconsciousness.

All this discussion presents us with evidence that give us an outline of the archetype directly connected to this phenomenon and, therefore, to the problem of ethics. In the next paragraphs, we shall argue in defense of the hypothesis pointed out here.

The self and alterity

In *Good and Evil in Analytical Psychology* there is an important passage that supports our argument. We shall resume the prior discussion on the confrontation with evil,

or rather, about the work with the moral extremes. There, he comments on the empirical effects on the individual confronted with an ethical problem:

When we observe how people behave when they are faced with a situation that has to be evaluated ethically, we become aware of a strange double effect: suddenly they see both sides. They become aware not only of their moral inferiorities but also, automatically, of their good qualities. They rightly say, “I can’t be as bad as all that.” To confront a person with his shadow is to show him his own light. Once one has experienced a few times what it is like to stand judiciously between the opposites, one begins to understand what is meant by the self. Anyone who perceives his shadow and his light simultaneously sees himself from two sides and thus gets in the middle. (Jung, 1959/1964, § 872)

As we see, Jung positions this concept as central in the discussion on ethics. For him, the experience of the self is what enables, at least to the suffering individual, the overcoming of the dichotomy between good and evil and, therefore, a referral to the conflict. He uses an analogy with Hindu philosophy to illustrate his concept of self:

As an empiricist I can at least establish that the Easterner like the Westerner is lifted out of the play of Maya, or the play of the opposites, through the experience of the Atman, the “self,” the higher totality. He knows that the world consists of darkness and light. I can master their polarity only by freeing myself from them by contemplating both, and so reaching a middle position. Only there am I no longer at the mercy of the opposites. (Jung, 1959/1964, § 875, emphasis added)

Since, it is this psychological experience that puts us in front of the more confusing symbols that always seem to be in full contradiction. Thus, the figures expressing the self are both the great and the small, the old wise man and the vulnerable child, son and father, good and evil etc. In this way, to the individual, this instance always appears as an authority because it exceeds the capabilities of his understanding. Jung ([1942/1954]/1973) defines it as follows:

The term “self” seemed to me a suitable one for this unconscious substrate, whose actual exponent in consciousness is the ego. The ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as object to subject, because the determining factors which radiate out from the self surround the ego on all sides and are therefore supraordinate to it. The self, like the unconscious, is an a priori

existent out of which the ego evolves. It is, so to speak, an unconscious prefiguration of the ego. It is not I who create myself, rather I happen to myself. (§ 391)

Therefore, its symbols are easily identified as *imago Dei*, which he attests in *Aion*, one of his works dedicated to the symbolism of the self, as well as in several other works (Jung, 1951/1979; 1958/1964; 1956/1977).

From it also results an attribute that shares with its symbols, which, as we have seen, are those of the union of opposites. For the Swiss psychiatrist, the self is the absolutely other:

As an individual phenomenon, the self is “smaller than small”; as the equivalent of the cosmos, it is “bigger than big.” The self, regarded as the counter-pole of the world, its “absolutely other,” is the sine qua non of all empirical knowledge and consciousness of subject and object. Only because of this psychic “otherness” is consciousness possible at all. Identity does not make consciousness possible; it is only separation, detachment, and agonizing confrontation through opposition that produce consciousness and insight. (Jung, 1940/1980, § 289)

As we sought to demonstrate, this has serious ethical implications, insofar as we can identify a *third* in ethical discussion, a psychic alterity is a precondition to knowledge itself, of the other as world and as *otherness*. Thus, in the same way the other demands from me, the self inescapably demands an answer.

Final considerations

Finally, we have elements to assert that, if the ethical relationship can be summed up in the relationship between man and God, it is because ethics emerges as a clash and a response to the demands of the whole personality, i.e., of the self. Therefore, Jung remains in the circle of deep psychology to seek interpretations which are accessible to the problem of ethics. His interest remains far from metaphysics, as he purposely points out on several occasions (Jung, 1951/1979, 1959/1964, 1990). However, he does not fear in his scientific argument the use of terms which have always been used by man to deal with the phenomenon of ethics.

The supraordination of the self regarding the ego is clear, therefore, in the experience of the other will that imposes itself on the ego's decisions and provokes a certain egoic decentering. This one will – we call it God's will or voice of God, or simply the compensations released by the unconscious – seems to us to be, in a double aspect, that which makes manifest the conflict and what withholds its resolution.

Indeed, if we review what we have developed so far, we shall find that the conflict of duties is installed by a gradual increase of self-knowledge that comes from the contact with the shadow, with the unconscious, which raises the problem of good and evil. It confronts the individual with the most ultimate questions, whose solution moves him away from the collective moral, pushing it to a solution that does not fit rationality or custom anymore.

In these cases, the solution is proposed by symbols that combine opposites and that are, thus, generally described as symbols of the whole. This solution, however, still imposes a task no less difficult than the conflict itself, which is to maintain your own ethos for itself, follow your own law, become what you are. In one word: individuation. Concept that defines, in its strict sense, the conscientious consideration of the unconscious's contents by the self's consciousness. It is the accomplishment of the self.

Indeed, this conscientious consideration of the unconscious is manifested by Jung's statement (1990) in a letter, that “God shows me the facts with which I have to live. If he does not reject them, I cannot” (p. 379). I cannot simply reject the facts of psychic reality, especially when its value overcomes by far those of social convention. But that does not mean that the individual is subjected in its entirety. Without the participation of the self there is no individuation. The decision on the facts presented by the unconscious are the self's decision, even if the question of whether this decision is really free is idle.

In the end, the ethical decision is a constant referral to an other. It is a response to the self and, therefore, to the social group. Ethics is, therefore, to Jung, a subject that, far from restricting itself to the field of rational judgment, arises exactly from the collapse of reason. It is precisely there that the individual shall be convened as a whole to decide. The construction of the ethos, thus, is a process that means, when faced with *fidelity* and *designation*, the accomplishment of the self:

Only the creative power of the ethos that expresses the whole man can pronounce the final judgment. Like all the creative faculties in man, his ethos flows empirically from two sources: from rational consciousness and from the irrational unconscious. It is a special instance of what I have called the transcendent function, which is the discursive co-operation of conscious and unconscious factors or, in theological language, of reason and grace. (Jung, 1958/1964, § 854)

In a sense, the inclusion of this *tertium* in the center of the discussion on ethics is the Jungian contribution to the enlargement of our worldview on the sense of alterity itself.

Psique e ética em C. G. Jung: o lugar do irracional na constituição do ethos

Resumo: O artigo põe em questão uma afirmação de Jung de que a ética se resumiria na relação entre homem e Deus. Tomando-a como problema, busca uma articulação entre os conceitos junguianos para uma resposta do que se entende por ética nessa perspectiva. Esboçamos um percurso que passa pelos problemas dos opostos morais, pelo confronto com a sombra e, por fim, abordamos a questão que inicia a pesquisa. Ao final, argumentamos que tal relação aduzida por Jung é, em termos psicológicos, a relação entre o eu e o si-mesmo. A ética seria nesse sistema uma resposta a uma outra voz supraracional, “a voz de Deus”, que, para além da pura estética da *imagem*, conjuga consciente e inconsciente; demanda a totalidade da personalidade.

Palavras-chave: ética, C. G. Jung, alteridade.

Psyche et l'éthique dans le C. G. Jung: la place de l'irrationnel dans la constitution de l'ethos

Résumé: L'article remet en question l'affirmation de Jung selon laquelle l'éthique serait résumée dans la relation entre l'homme et Dieu. Prenant cela comme un problème, il cherche une articulation entre les concepts jungiens pour une réponse de ce que l'on entend par éthique dans cette perspective. Nous décrivons un parcours qui passe par les problèmes d'opposés moraux, la confrontation avec l'ombre, et enfin, nous abordons la question qui lance la recherche. En fin de compte, nous affirmons qu'une relation telle que Jung est, en termes psychologiques, la relation entre le soi et le soi. L'éthique serait dans ce système une réponse à une autre voix supra-rationnelle, “la voix de Dieu”, qui, au-delà de la pure esthétique de l'image, se combine consciemment et inconsciemment; demande toute la personnalité.

Mots-clés: éthique, C. G. Jung, altérité.

Psique y ética en C. G. Jung: el lugar del irracional en la constitución de los ethos

Resumen: El artículo pone en cuestión una afirmación de Jung de que la ética se resumiría en la relación entre hombre y Dios. Tomándola como problema, busca una articulación entre los conceptos junguianos para una respuesta de lo que se entiende por ética en esa perspectiva. Esbozamos un recorrido que pasa por los problemas de los opuestos morales, por el enfrentamiento con la sombra y, por fin, abordamos la cuestión que inicia la investigación. Al final, argumentamos que tal relación planteada por Jung es, en términos psicológicos, la relación entre el yo y el sí mismo. La ética sería en ese sistema una respuesta a otra voz, supraracional, “la voz de Dios”, que más allá de la pura estética de la imagen, conjuga consciente e inconsciente; demanda la totalidad de la personalidad.

Palabras clave: ética, C. G. Jung, alteridad.

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